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ABSTRACT

This anthology presents seven articles that focus on the integration of ethical and spiritual concerns into the academic curriculum. The argument is made for the inclusion of ethical and religious concerns in the study of subjects such as literature, history, foreign languages and cultures, and science. The articles include: "The Voice of the Other" (Fran Scoble); "Spirituality through Literature: 'Not as Bad as We Expected'" (Alfred Ruggiero); "Lamenting for a Vision" (J. Philip Zaeder); "The Holocaust: An Icon for Religious Education" (Julie A. Collins); "Ethics in the French Classroom"--an interview with Madeira's Foreign Language head, Margaret McBride); "Ethics and Values in a Technological Society and in the Classroom" (Kevin Reel); and "Moral Education in the Midst of International Crisis" (Michael J. Gorman). A postscript to the essays responds to the question, "No More Room in the Schedule?" (DB)

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Crossroads: Integrated Models for Teaching Ethics and Spirituality

edited by
Michael J. Gorman

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Introduction

All too often in schools, spirituality and ethics are separated from the main arteries of school life, relegated to the chapel and chaplain, if the school has such, or to classes in ethics, world religions, or theology.

There is a growing suspicion among educators, however, that such dichotomies in schools are as inappropriate as they are in life, as if there were some aspects of living or of learning that can avoid moral and spiritual questions.

This collection of previously published articles from the Council for Religion's *Newsletter* and *The Chaplain's Craft* brings together in one place several articles focusing on an important theme: the integration of ethical and spiritual concerns into the academic curriculum.

The authors of these articles are evangelists, not for a particular religious or moral point of view, but for the inclusion of ethical and religious concerns in the study of such subjects as literature, history, foreign languages and cultures, and science.

The offerings assembled here are intended as discussion starters, as beginning points, not as conclusions. The authors, as well as the staff of CRIS, hope that they will challenge and inspire others to move in these and other similar directions.

For many years now, the monthly CRIS *Newsletter* has stimulated and informed school people around the country. A *Newsletter* reader may be a school head, association executive, division chair, classroom teacher, community service director, chaplain, parent, or trustee. Contributors have included some of the most respected educators in the independent-school world, while articles have addressed some of the most important moral, spiritual, and general educational issues within that world. The *Newsletter* is a significant educational forum, and appreciation for it runs wide and deep.

In more recent years, *The Chaplain's Craft* has served a similar function for a narrower audience. As a quarterly journal of theological reflection within the

school world, *The Chaplain's Craft* has raised, and often suggested answers to, questions that are no less important and no less difficult than those addressed in the *Newsletter*.

The *Newsletter* goes out primarily to CRIS member schools, which receive from one to four copies, depending on their membership status. Copies are often passed around and lost or dog-eared in the process. This more permanent anthology permits administrators, teachers, trustees, parents, student leaders, and others to contemplate a variety of important issues in education that have been raised in print over the last few years. It also allows schools who have not been CRIS members to have, in one place, recent thought-provoking articles on key issues.

CRIS hopes that *Crossroads: Integrated Models for Teaching Ethics and Spirituality* will be widely used not only by individuals but also by groups of administrators, entire faculties, boards of trustees, parent groups, and student leadership associations. In addition, schools may also wish to acquire and study the companion volume, *In Pursuit of Values, In Search of Faith*.

Fall 1991

LITERATURE

The Voice of the Other

Fran Scoble

When she wrote this article, Fran Scoble was principal of the Upper School at Colorado Academy (CO). She now serves as head of Westridge School (CA).

In his book *The Moral Life of Children*, Robert Coles addresses the ways in which crisis bears on the mental life of young people. He focuses this book on the historical crisis of school integration in the sixties, the social economic crisis of Appalachian families and of migrant farm workers, and the crisis of racial impasse. The book includes many moving anecdotes, made more significant by the fact that Coles is a trained observer who is a practicing child psychiatrist.

Coles also speaks of our tendency to create the "objective other" in order to cope with our fears and insecurities about ourselves. In its worst form, of course, this is prejudice and bigotry. In its milder forms, this is especially poignant in the young who are struggling for a sense of self and a sense of identity as part of their passage into adulthood. In any school environment, one can observe readily the practice of social exclusion through which groups of students know themselves. In effect, they are saying, "We know who we are because of who is NOT part of our group." Negative definition has always been easier than positive. We all know what cliques are.

Spend some time in any high school in America and you will see the informal politics of adolescent self-definition through exclusion. It is not meant in cruelty—carelessness maybe. It is rather the result of an intense focus on oneself and on one's own standing in a group. It is the extension of the belief that there really *is* safety in numbers.

Last year at the national conference of independent schools, Robert Coles delivered an impassioned speech in which he implored schools to take students back to great literature as a way of understanding the point of view of "the other," as a way of gaining empathy. The great limitation of high school students is their lack of broad experience. We can read books that describe the experience of the poor, the alienated and the rejected, but students often possess little capacity to identify

with such characters and such situations. They often, understandably, wonder why that character didn't "move to another city" or "leave the person who was treating her so mean" or "go to school so he could get a better job." In thinking that way, they are surely expressing values and options with which they have been blessed. It is hard to believe they do not exist for everyone.

Books are a place to start; that's true. They can bring the wide, varied, complex world of human experience into the mind of a young, relatively inexperienced, student. But the voice of the "other" is all around us and is much closer at hand than the literature of our curriculum whose characters are at least twice-removed. Those voices may be heard in films about South Africa, in a documentary book about El Salvador, in a talk by a Chicano muralist, and in a debate about an amendment to make English the official language. For those of us whose daily lives are remote from such issues, it becomes even more important that we stretch our vision to see what is going on beyond our own carefully defined worlds. Once we see, it is important that we try to understand how and why others might view the world differently. Here, then, is where the school must choose whether to inspire that extension of vision or to remain content to perpetuate a more limited, and perhaps more comfortable, perspective.

Our world is so complex and its problems so intractable, those moments of understanding may become moments of retreat. As Coles says, "It is at these moments of heightened vulnerability that the mind gratefully seizes the chance to dismiss others, or obtain the protection of others." Anxious and uncertain on our own, or about our own situation, we discover and blame a hostile "them"; or we discover and joyfully embrace a friendly "them." It takes great courage to allow room for both "thems" in our hearts and minds so that we practice the informal politics of *in*clusion rather than *ex*clusion.

Reprinted from the March 1989 issue of the CRIS Newsletter

Spirituality Through Literature

"Not as Bad as We Expected"

by Alfred Ruggiero

Alfred Ruggiero serves as English teacher and chaplain at Moravian Academy in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Every year since I've been teaching high school (except for one or two particularly dry ones) at about the same time—late winter or very early spring—most of my students in English class miraculously discover that they are spiritual beings as well as physical ones, that they have a spirituality as well as a body, a psyche, a personality. Intellectually and emotionally, they make the connection—or, better, make the leap—from experience to philosophy, from things to ideas. What's even better is that most of them *know* that they have made the connection, and deservedly they feel competent, even smart.

What they don't realize, however, and what I feel timid to tell them for fear that they will reject and regress, is that in making that connection, they have also made a leap of faith. Those who have been willing to journey with me from September into spring, frequently traveling blind, all clear the chasm and land in varying states of safety and assurance on the other side. Faith is a gift, yes. Some people have it and some don't; some get it, and some never do. But the yearly pilgrims through eleventh-grade English do learn what faith is, and often what it feels like—and so, perhaps, become more open to the gift when it's offered to them.

Commenting upon her visit to Lourdes, in a letter to Elizabeth Bishop dated June 1, 1958, Flannery O'Connor observed:

> *Lourdes was not as bad as I expected it to be . . . . Somebody in Paris told me the miracle at Lourdes is that there are no epidemics and I found this to be the truth. Apparently nobody catches anything. The water in the baths is changed once a day, regardless of how many people . . . get into it.*

> *I saw nothing but peasants and was very conscious of the distinct odor of the crowd. The supernatural is a fact there but it replaces nothing natural; except maybe those germs.*
> (*The Habit of Being*, ed. Sally Fitzgerald; page 286)

As humans, both we and our students are frequently fascinated by, if not physically drawn to, the germs and "the distinct odor of the crowd." So was Flannery O'Connor. And Faulkner. And so were Sophocles, Chaucer, Dante, and Shakespeare. For those writers, too, the supernatural is a fact; but if that were all there was to it, they would be philosophers or theologians perhaps, but not artists. For them, and for any serious, important, lasting artists, no matter how much of a fact the supernatural may be, it cannot replace the natural.

And precisely therein lies the value of using literature to teach our students what faith is, what spirituality is, perhaps even who God is. Why wasn't Lourdes as bad as Flannery expected it to be? Because the odor in the air was not the odor of sanctity, but the odor of the crowd? Or because, despite the odor of the crowd, miraculously nobody caught anything? Both, probably. To use secular literature to teach what faith is, is to smell the odors at the shrine, but also to sniff out the possibility that we are more, much more, than our odors and our germs. In his essay "Poetry, Symbolism, and Typology," Thomas Merton distinguishes between literature which is merely "devotional" and that which is truly "spiritual." For our eleventh-grade students, much of what they read in English class, whether apparently sacred or profane, becomes genuinely spiritual.

How does that happen? I don't know. But I can, certainly, lay out some conditions under which it is likely to happen. If what follows seems to be overly specific, it is only because I am using portions of my current curriculum as an illustration. Variations are more than possible.

Some Companions

Although some authors are more suitable companions on this faith journey than others, choosing those who travel well is not too tricky, and I find that I don't have to be terribly selective as long as the course is undergirded by a few who raise the most important questions. In American literature, consider the following: Bradstreet, Hawthorne, Melville, Dickinson, Thoreau, Whitman, Hemingway and Fitzgerald for contrast, Faulkner, O'Connor, Theodore Roethke, Denise Levertov,

Thomas Merton, A.R. Ammons. No real surprises there. Obviously, the list is not nearly exhaustive; but even if we were to extend it, we would not need to dip into trendiness or so-called young-adult literature in order to find what we need, or to complete our scheme. If we begin to appeal to works that are sub-literary, we too obviously stack the deck to make a point, and we lose, not only our students, but also the most important element of our enterprise—discovery.

The greatest writers from the above list—and I'll go way out on a limb and name them: Hawthorne, Faulkner, and Flannery O'Connor—are great because their work is possessed of what Keats called "negative capability." They are, in Keats' words, ". . . capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason . . ." Their agenda is their art, not our souls; they did not write to teach, preach, or explain anything, and if they wrote to exorcise their own demons, they were very professional about it. Consequently, their initial appeal to students is through matters very human, at times even grotesquely so. Having been absorbed with Hulga's wooden leg in O'Connor's "Good Country People," for example, students find their fashionable spiritual indifference apparently reenforced by Hulga's claims to belief in Nothing. When the young Bible salesman, whom she has lured into the hayloft to steal his innocence, ends up stealing her leg instead, both Hulga and the readers are forced to recognize their own innocence and foolishness, while getting a glimpse of what a real spiritual void looks and sounds like. "And I'll tell you another thing," the Bible salesman says to Hulga as he packs her leg into his briefcase and disappears down the ladder. "You ain't so smart. I been believing in nothing ever since I was born."

Self-Discovery and Class Direction

The initial discoveries, however, do not always have to come from the literature; that is, the students do not have to move from the recognition of a truth in literature to a search for the same truth in themselves. Both they and I have found it even more fruitful to proceed inductively, when possible; to discover a spiritual sense in their own writing and discussion, and then to turn around and find that spirituality confirmed and reconfirmed in the literature they are reading. Recently, following a chapel devoted to Martin Luther King, Jr., I asked my students to do about twenty minutes of free writing beginning with the words, "I have a dream." Simple enough, perhaps. But the reverberations and spin-offs from that one simple assignment provided us with fuel for an entire third quarter of the school year. The idea of freedom that grew out of those classes provided a focal point for our synthesis

of almost the entire junior curriculum. In this case, the students approached the literature with a good deal of confidence, because they had already begun to make some very important discoveries about themselves in the same way that the great writers made those discoveries—by writing. We can now put this down as a successful year.

So once again, my students have made the leap; they've visited the shrine and found that it is not as bad as they expected it to be. They have the right words; they're asking the right kinds of questions; they've learned something about writing and American literature, and probably about themselves and about me. And amid all this traveling and discovering, a few—maybe more—have found something which is crucial to their life and their joy: that God finds himself in the most unlikely places—in their minds and hearts.

Reprinted from the Spring 1991 issue of The Chaplain's Craft

Lamenting for a Vision

Rev. J. Philip Zaeder

Phil Zaeder is Protestant Chaplain at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts.

The matrix of these times, so highly propelling towards professionalism and college, is one that seems to perpetuate affluence, to assure the security of a whole class of people. In that context, and in the particular context of the independent school, my task has been to invite students as best I can to look at very old paths—old paths of service and especially old ways of reading texts, to find out what voice a text contains, to discover where it sends its characters and how it mirrors the journey of life.

In a course called "The Literature of the Quest," my students probe the paradigm of the journey: the going out, the initiation, and then the return home. We focus particularly on that middle stage: having left home, but not yet in the place of destination; neither here nor there; not yet, but no longer. This is the powerful stage described by anthropologists as the liminal—that strange realm we both want and fear, a place into which adolescents are pushed without choice, in which they grope for either guidelines or shortcuts. At one point in the course, we study the Oglala Sioux, whose adolescents are sent from home into the wilderness, where they wait for initiation. The tradition calls this "lamenting for a vision," crying for a vision.

Waiting

The excitement of any teaching ministry is attending to those people who also are crying for a vision, who are waiting, in an old sense of the word. To wait on the text, to wait on the Lord, to wait on the opportunity to serve, is often to find that there are ancient voices to be heard in a very present way. And so with my students I wait on the text, for what it can reveal about us and for the visions we can discern in it for the difficult road ahead.

Some who listen for the voices of those old texts find themselves hearing a call to go deeper into the liminal through other initiations, and beyond them to unexpected homecomings. I think particularly of the journey begun by a young woman, Myrna Santiago, born in Mexico, who had studied English for only four years before coming to this school. She discovered in the literature of the quest the notion that she herself was a part of a narrative tradition of flesh and bone, part of a generation of brown women with stories to tell. She went from here to study Latin American culture, first at Princeton and then, with a Fulbright grant, in Mexico. After that, she came back here to teach for a year. Together, that year, we planned a symposium called "Latin America, North and South," a dialogue about economics and heritage between two cultures and two languages. But still the quest beckoned: deciding that she must serve a people in the midst of struggle, she went to Nicaragua, where she continues to work as a translator for the National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

And I, who also wait for a vision—I, in learning from Myrna's voice, discover a need to learn Spanish, for how can I talk about two voices if I don't know a thing about that second voice? Not very good at languages, I sit with 10th-graders, struggling with grammar, trying to conjugate in the subjunctive. So it was that this summer the journey called me to the country I least thought I would ever see, Nicaragua, wanting simply to listen to the voices, and to be able to say something simple back. In Chontales province, one old man, his face very much marked by weather, said, simply, "We have asked you for peace and you have given us war. Why?" And I heard an old text: Pray, Jesus says, with all the insistence of someone who knocks on a friend's door asking for bread and, when refused, keeps knocking. Pray with all that insistence—ask and it will be given, knock and it will be opened—***for what parent among you, when your child asks you for bread, would ever give your child a stone?*** And so the cycle goes: text illuminates life, illuminates text.

Knocking

I hear students, even in these acquisitive times, asking for bread, asking for education of the heart. Are we prepared to help them find appropriate answers? "What do you mean," some ask, "when you preach to us that serving others, rather than bringing us into bondage, leads us to freedom?" It is part of chaplaincy to listen to these voices, to put before the institutional community resources, traditions, songs, stories, hymns.

That passionate, insistent knocking that I often see in students is part of what continually feeds me. It teaches me that I can live out of hope and not out of expectation. When I am forever expecting this or that to happen, certain that I have been here before, that the kids are the same as they ever were, I trap myself in living out of *chronos*, chronological time. It is *kairos*, the liminal, in-between time, where the disclosures are, over and over again. It is not given to me to know, but it is given to me to wait. It is not given to me to control. It is given to me to hope.

This leads me often to think about power and authority. Henri Nouwen's book, *The Wounded Healer*, teaches that our apparent power is actually our weakness, that our true strength is our vulnerability. *King Lear*, which we read in winter term, is for me the extraordinary living text of that truth. Lear, holder of society's consummate power, has never had to distinguish between power and authority; he speaks only in the imperative, which is power's language. But he discovers with savage intensity that the world his imperatives had demanded is not the world that he has been given. He asks for bread and receives a stone from the daughter he treasures most. The clash thrusts him into the place that is neither here nor there, neither up nor down—the place of lamenting for a vision. "I have taken too little care of this," he says. "Take physic, pomp. Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel."

Traveling and Telling

It is so easy to get weighed down by the possessions and politics of any highly developed institution—school or kingdom. But then there are these old texts, and people who listen to their old voices even in the midst of the enormous resources of a school like this, and find themselves traveling in extraordinary, unexpected directions. Like Lear, they come to ask themselves what authority lies beneath the trappings of worldly power.

As a teacher, I struggle with the identical dynamic. A number beside a paper means a lot in the temporal journey of people through school. As a chaplain, it is sometimes a bit easier: it is not given to me very often, virtually never, to give an imperative. I have not said, "Let the chapel be filled," and found it filled! But as a teacher I say, "Let there be a test," and there is a test, and "Let it be graded," and it is so. Yet on the other side of the power that I have in the grade, I too am vulnerable to the very texts I am teaching, the very voices I am hearing.

And what authority I do have lies in the commission that I was given in ordination, in the imperative that I should go and tell a story, tell good news with the best skill and energy I have. It is an extraordinary authority to be charged with that story, and to come gradually to understand that the one who most needs to hear it is—I.

The exchange among people who need the story is fundamentally a mysterious one. That is why the question of affluence or non-affluence just is not very interesting to me. Affluence can indeed hide us from all kinds of things, shield us from all kinds of voices. But it is not given to me to measure. A vision is not easily put in a box, or on a scale. Usually it has to be narrated, and its language is the subjunctive: not so much a matter of "is" as "might be" or "might have been." So I just try to tell the story.

Reprinted from the Fall 1989 issue of **The Chaplain's Craft**

HISTORY/FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The Holocaust: An Icon for Religious Education

Julie A. Collins

Julie Collins is head of the Religious Studies Department at Georgetown Preparatory School in Maryland.

A week spent studying genocide is not everyone's idea of spiritual renewal, but in my 16 years of high-school teaching few experiences have been as helpful to me or as formative as the "Facing History and Ourselves" Summer Institute. It was superbly organized, beautifully presented, and staffed by people who know adolescents well and also have an amazing grip on the mystery of the human experience. Immersing oneself in the Holocaust, I discovered, can do that for you.

That may sound ironic, but it is not meant to be. I know that studying the Holocaust can also be an experience of despair, of over-arching evil that engulfs the human and destroys it, but my week in Boston taught me that it need not be. I became increasingly convinced that the Holocaust is the pre-eminent religious experience of the 20th century. It is where the forces of light and dark battled on a stage of heroic proportions. It is a drama unparalleled in its ability to cast into high relief the struggles of the human soul. To look into evil—even in a situation where good triumphed only in shining moments—is to find God, because God is particularly present where human anguish peels away at our pretenses and exposes the heart. God is present in pain because pain offers the possibility of knowing the truth—about ourselves, our society, and our religious convictions. Because the Holocaust is so dense with suffering, it can be a prism that takes our assumptions about human life and refracts them, giving us greater clarity and also greater doubt. The Holocaust does not give us answers, but it definitely can help us shape the right questions. And in this post-Enlightenment age, what better gift can we give our students?

A Personal Pilgrimage

I approached the Summer Institute afraid of horribly graphic film clips, gut-wrenching survivor testimonies, and that free-floating guilt that any caring person can experience when faced with the horrors of prejudice and systematic cruelty. But I had come to value the study of the Holocaust quite gradually in my life, so I arrived in Boston fairly sure that the week would be worthwhile and something I could handle.

I was never taught about the Holocaust as a child, or even as an adult for that matter (and I was originally trained as a history teacher). My earliest memory of the Holocaust was a Sunday morning radio broadcast that I heard when I was nine or 10 years old. I was staying with my grandparents and, typically, I was up at the crack of dawn, trying to entertain myself without waking the rest of the house. I switched on the radio and began listening to a show that chronicled the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto and the eventual destruction of the Jewish community there. The drama was full of the pathos of the story—the oppression, the courage, the despair as no one came to aid the resistance. I listened for 10 or 15 minutes and then switched it off—I could not bear it.

Haunted by a Monster

It was too evil, too sad, and too unresolved. My childish mind was stunned—why had the Nazis done this to the Jews and why had no one come to their aid? Why had all these people perished? The story gripped me because the evil was so immense and devouring and had happened for no explainable reason. It was not the expected outcome of war. I knew that people died in war, but only "accidentally"—they were civilians caught in the cross-fire. It was horrible but somehow understandable. Genocide, the sadistic, systematic murder of a people because of some quality that marks them intrinsically, was something I never knew existed. I had never heard the word. But in the radio play I had tasted the horror of it, and it was so absurd, so inexplicable, that I fled from it. It was like a boogey man, a monster that dwelt in the dark stretches of adulthood, and I wanted to know nothing about it.

In high school and college history courses, the boogey man again raised his head, though rather innocuously. The Holocaust was mentioned briefly in the last pages of European history texts, but the murdered Jews remained anonymous. Six to 10 million lost was simply another statistic that reinforced the justice of the Allied cause. It was not until graduate school, in the midst of my own struggles with life

and meaning, that I encountered the Holocaust again—this time as a disturbing religious reality.

I had rushed through college in an over-achieving frenzy and had not allowed myself the soul-searching doubts that I think are part of everyone's early twenties. But just as all the developmentalists tell us, we never really escape these things, and in my first months of a history graduate program they came crashing down on me with ludicrous abandon. I walked around in a depressed daze asking myself and anyone who would listen, "Why is there air?" and "What is the meaning of existence?" This, needless to say, did not make for productivity, and very soon I was failing out of graduate school. My love life was in shambles, my professional goals unclear, and I felt trapped, uncertain, and deeply sad.

In the Catholic Student Center one day I discovered Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* and devoured it in one night. Even as I read I was astounded, because up to that point I had so scrupulously avoided any of the survivor literature that had begun to surface in the early seventies. I had been terrified of coming near that much pain before, but now it was a relief to read Frankl's narrative and place my more ordinary angst beside it. This man had known great suffering, had lived in the midst of horrendous evil, and had emerged more whole, more generous, and more realistic about the human condition. Maybe I could do the same. Maybe suffering was in fact a crucible that could either purify and free us, or dehumanize and destroy us. Maybe there was a choice and each of us, at some point, was asked to make it.

"Why Should I Care?"

These experiences all came flooding back to me in 1982 when I was trying to design a course that would serve as a reflection component for our Christian Service Program. Our seniors were doing 40 hours of service in the community with those who were experiencing "deprivation and/or injustice." Somehow we were hoping that this experience would increase their sensitivity to systemic evil and encourage their commitment to combat it. It was a tough assignment. My 10 years of teaching history had taught me that teenagers, like adults, have an immense capacity to distance themselves from another's pain, especially if the other is older, darker, less educated, or foreign. At best what one got was "Gee, it's too bad about the famine in the Sudan (or homelessness in D.C. or racial injustice in South Africa or . . .), but what can I possibly do about it?" Which, as all service project directors know, is just a polite variation on the more pervasive: "I am not responsible, I am not

involved, it is not my problem. WHY are we having to do this service project, Ms. Collins?!"

At some point in my struggles it struck me that approaching injustice from a political, economic, or even sociological perspective would not work. It would only lead us to an unproductive morass of rhetoric and name-calling. (Teenage boys, I've discovered, cannot long remain politically objective, and the ad hominem assault—"you liberal wimp!" being a favorite—is always near the surface of any discussion.) Somehow I had to get at their core question: "Why should I care? Who are these people to me?" Out of the blue one day I remembered the "Elephant Man." I had seen the PBS filming of the Broadway play, so off I ran to the nearest video store to rent David Lynch's masterpiece. I showed it to the boys and it was perfect—the unit began to fall into place. The story was "old" (a Victorian setting) and bizarre (a real, live monster!) and gripping. Yet it taught a profound message—we are all of us disabled, all of us wounded, all of us struggling to be valued in a world that does not value humanity. The movie touched their question, "Why should I care?", because it asked the question that trembles behind it—"What does it mean to be human?" In the distorted features of John Merrick we had the perfect icon for the fundamental question: "What is a human being?" and "Why are we valuable?"

As I watched the movie with the boys, I realized that I could not ask them to be humane, to be budding humanitarians, unless each of them had grappled with his own humanity—and lack of it. For the movie also portrayed in a non-threatening, apolitical way (it was an "old" story, "back then," not now. . .) how we flee those who suffer for fear we will "catch" their pain. We have no answer for so many forms of human misery and thus we feel overwhelmed, completely ill-equipped to solve the problems that live among us. In our inadequacy we create distance and surround the other's pain with blame. "This person's suffering is not my fault, he is NOT my neighbor, his pain is not my burden." And if we are really terrified we decide, "These people are not victims but perpetrators. Their pain is the natural outcome of their own degenerate nature. They are not like me, they are not human, they can be used, violated, and even destroyed."

Revisiting Pain

Then comes the Holocaust. The inevitable outcome of dehumanization is destruction. We humans are forever tempted to project our own darkness onto someone else, and if we can make a whole population questionably human, then we can establish our own purity. If you are inferior, I must be superior. If you are

inhuman, I must be super-human. It is so easy, so natural, and such a vivid picture of the nature of sin, of alienation gone wild. If I can distance you far enough from me, I can ultimately deny that we have anything in common—even our humanity. So I followed "The Elephant Man" with *Man's Search for Meaning*. It dove-tailed perfectly with the aims of the course because the story of the Holocaust and its origins in Western anti-semitism continually hammered away at the two primary questions: "What does it mean to be human?" and "Who is my neighbor?"

The book also helped the students to grapple with their own pain—just as it had helped me so many years before. I took 10 quotations from Frankl and at the end of the unit asked each boy to take one quote, explain what the author had meant by it, and then explain, based on some personal life experience, whether he felt the quote was valid or invalid. As I told the students, the best grade did not go to the person with the most horrible tragedy to recount—I fervently hoped that no real losses had overtaken any of them. What I was looking for was an understanding of Frankl that sprang from an echo in their own hearts: "I know this is true because I have been there—I have suffered, I have failed, I have survived. What is my story, my insight, my triumph in the face of loss?"

What I got were stories ranging from the tragic deaths of siblings to the predictable traumas of games lost and friendship rejected. It didn't matter. What mattered was that they had revisited their pain and shared it with someone else. They had wrestled with meaning and peeked behind the veil of suffering to glimpse the face of God warming the dark night. Frankl had told them, like Jesus centuries before, that self-actualization is only possible through self-transcendence, and that pain can be transformed by the attitude we choose to take toward it. We cannot be free of our circumstances, but we are free to decide our stance toward them. Our humanity is a gift that we either choose to develop or choose to destroy. In the words of Viktor Frankl: "At any moment a man chooses what will be the monument of his existence."

Suffering and Service

And now service made some sense. Suffering was not quite so fearful because it was not always a problem to be solved. I am not responsible to eradicate my neighbor's suffering as much as I am asked not to abandon him to it. I cannot eliminate the frailty of old age, but I can combat the loneliness. I cannot heal the disability, but I can bridge the isolation. I cannot shelter all the homeless, but I can face the human being before me and offer my hand.

This does not deny the systemic nature of social evil and our need to challenge the attitudes and institutions that perpetuate it. It does say, however, that pain can only be dealt with one life, one heart at a time, and the core of all human pain is abandonment, denial, and rejection. If we want our students to be social activists, we must first teach them to face their own suffering, share it with another human being, and so bring it to the God who understands all the anguish of the human heart. Then—and only then—can they reach out to another's suffering and face it without fear. The greatest force that institutionalizes social injustice is our terror of suffering. We fear loss, so we take more than we need. We know rejection, so in our anger we strike before we are struck again. It is the original sin, and our students must face it in themselves and in their society if they are to combat evil with love and fight greed with the asceticism of service.

Service will never become a life-long commitment unless it makes sense to our young people, and it will only make sense if they have first grappled with the nature of suffering. And this is why it is so important for our students to understand the Holocaust—but not simply by itself. If the Holocaust is presented alone, without the appropriate historical, religious, and literary underpinnings, it becomes just another example of our immense capacity for cruelty and oppression. If the Holocaust is not sensitively presented, our students will understandably react with either denial or despair.

Freedom and Responsibility

This is why the Facing History curriculum is such a gift. It does not begin with the horrors but with the human. How does a human being, an individual, fit into society? What are our freedoms, what are our responsibilities? What is the psychology of fanaticism? Why is violence glamorous and power so easily corrupted? These and other questions are dealt with through short stories, animated films, psychological simulations. Gradually, the origins of the Holocaust are explored and students come to know Jewish communities that existed in Europe before the devastation. Now the victims have faces and the origins of anti-semitism in scripture and Church teaching become all the more appalling.

The death of the Jews is seen in the much broader context of human evil and human apathy. The testimony of survivors gives us a view into hell. Students are encouraged to see the mystery that is evil and explore all the layers of complicity. Lastly, the few whose heroism saved lives are visited, and we probe the ordinariness

of such courage: "I did what anyone would do." "I had no time to think; I just took them in." Always the question "Why, why, why?" reverberates in the background like a mournful bell, and its pain is so revealing.

I said that the Summer Institute was a time of spiritual renewal for me, and that is true. It was draining and painful at times, but so clarifying. One cannot look at this level of devastation without revisiting one's own losses and feeling them again. One cannot look at choices that ended in life or death and not re-examine one's own path. Nothing is quite so little or insignificant again—no choice without meaning. One's life and one's choices take on tremendous significance, and life rises again to an inestimable value.

The people at Facing History are expert practitioners who are deeply committed to this area of study, but they are not fanatics. I never felt manipulated or patronized. We were all respected and valued as professionals and as human beings. The staff does not operate out of any explicit religious orientation, and yet the wisdom, gentleness, and insight with which they treat the human condition (and the Institute participants) is an experience of grace. They practice what they preach—the Institute is run like their high school curriculum. The student is challenged but respected, and the questions that are raised are the student's responsibility—no answers, no formula, no "spin" on the Holocaust is attempted. You are invited into the mystery, given some guideposts to follow, but the conclusions are up to you—and only valued in so far as they are your own.

In sum, the Facing History Institute is one of the finest teacher education programs I have ever experienced. If you are interested in incorporating the Holocaust into your religious studies, history, or ethics curriculum, I recommend it to you enthusiastically.

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Ethics in the French Classroom

An Interview with Madeira's Foreign Language Head, Margaret McBride

Margaret McBride has been head of the foreign language department and a teacher of French and linguistics at the Madeira School in Potomac, Virginia since 1979. In addition to standard language courses, she teaches two innovative electives, "Ethical Issues in French History: The Revolution" and "Ethical Issues in French History: Nazi-Occupied France."

CRIS: Describe for us these two courses. What specifically do you "cover"? Are they taught in French? Who can enroll?

Margaret: These two courses are not traditional history courses but courses primarily in philosophy and ethics, with some psychology. The Revolution course begins with a survey of Western philosophy through the Renaissance—Plato, Socrates, Epicurus, the Stoics, Augustine, Aquinas, Machiavelli—and then concentrates on 18th-century French philosophy, particularly Voltaire. We examine each philosopher with two main questions (which, I tell the students, are humanity's main concerns): What is the nature of the universe? and What is the nature of man? I try to show them how speculation, visions of utopia, and the like can lead to fanaticism. I want them to see how parts of the intellectual tradition of the West in general and France in particular could be the groundwork for the Revolution—even the terror.

During the study of the Revolution itself we concentrate on the reign of terror and the ethical issues it raises. We focus especially on key figures like Robespierre and Marie Antoinette—on their character, their motives, their passions, their actions. Our overriding concerns are whether people are fundamentally good or evil, and where we get our morality or immorality.

The Nazi Occupation course, which is new, assumes knowledge of the philosophical tradition. We will look at Europe and especially France before the war, examine the occupation and French reactions, and read the existentialists (Camus, Sartre, etc.). Our main ethical focus, I think, will be the conflicts that arise between personal and social ethics, between personal good

and the common good.

These are two separate courses, though it is clearly best that they be taken as one two-part course. Taught in English, they are open to students in grades 10 through 12, but the sophomores are having quite a rough time. I have about a dozen students enrolled.

CRIS: How did the idea for these courses originate?

Margaret: I have always thought ethics is important for students, and as a teacher of literature I have always raised questions about the behavior of characters—something that always awakens student interest. When I grew up in France (and still today) French schools—both public and parochial—took ethics very seriously. Each morning we had to discuss an ethical maxim or quote, and at the end of the day we had to make an entry in our "ethical journal." We noted and assessed our actions of the day—had we been ethical or not? I am still a strong believer in introspection.

Coming from this background, I always wanted to do ethics at Madeira, so I decided to try a course where it would be easiest to begin, in my own department.

CRIS: Why did you choose these two periods in French history?

Margaret: These two periods of time demonstrate very well the best and the worst that people can do, ethically speaking.

CRIS: What materials and what methods do you use?

Margaret: I present a lot of the material on the philosophers, and a colleague in the department does quite a bit of the historical material. Students read Voltaire and the existentialists and some historical articles—but no "text." (These are not courses on dates and facts but on people and ideas, actions and motives.) But our main method is discussion.

Also, students keep a journal—something like the one I had to keep—in which they keep notes on ethical issues they think about or hear about. Once a week

we discuss issues from the journals; these discussions are intentionally unrelated to the historical content of the course.

CRIS: What has been the response of students so far?

Margaret: They love the discussion and genuinely appreciate learning about others and their values. They learn that "truths" are often really speculations, they learn thinking skills, and they apply them outside the classroom.

CRIS: How do you feel about the courses?

Margaret: Very good. These kids are the future leaders of this world. I am trying to do my share to help them be ethical leaders. A class like this develops a unique student-teacher bond, where we all learn not to be afraid to share our beliefs and feelings. It is all very satisfying.

CRIS: How do courses like these fit in to the goals of Madeira at this time?

Margaret: This may be the start of a four-year comprehensive program in ethics for grades 9-12. We may be forming a philosophy and religion department. There is a new interest among students and faculty in ethics. The faculty are encouraged to see kids interested in something [ethics] they didn't know existed a year ago. Some of the kids are even beginning to say, "Ethics is my life."

CRIS: Would you have any recommendations for teachers at other schools who might be interested in teaching similar courses?

Margaret: You need the support of the administration, which I have had. You have to see the first year as an experiment and plan to adjust things the next year. And you mustn't be afraid to teach ethics—you have to be a pioneer, especially in a school (like Madeira) that has no religious affiliation.

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SCIENCE

Ethics & Values in a Technological Society and in the Classroom

Kevin Reel

Kevin Reel is the Science Department Chair at The Thacher School in California

Ever since the neolithic age, when our species began to raise crops and goats instead of hunt game and gather berries, we have been granted increased security and broader choices as a result of our innovations. Technological solutions to human problems have allowed us to adapt quickly to changing environments and to solve social problems, but often with a mixed blessing: a "monkey's paw" that answers our prayers by introducing unthought-of horrors.

Indeed, although the science of nature may be without ethics, the application of science in the creation of new technologies is a process that is tightly linked to moral values. Even now, in reproductive options for example, the available choices stretch the ethical decision-making skills of both scientists and non-scientists. What will the future hold? And yet, while considerable energy is going into the reform of science education in America, probably only a small portion of the proposed new curricula will be dedicated to building the ethical skills that students need to make the moral decisions technology will demand of them.

The Difficulty of the Task

These skills are by no means simple to develop. It is obvious that some applications of science are morally wrong within any ethical framework—as in the cases exposed in the trials at Nuremberg after World War II. But what about cases that are not quite as extreme: for example, the use of animals in research. Is there within the Judeo-Christian origin of Western society the genesis of the idea that animals can be sacrificed to save a human? Can not the antithesis be found in some Eastern religions that consider all life to be harboring potentially transcendent souls?

From most ethical perspectives, uses of animals in research and in therapeutics cover a broad range on the spectrum of acceptability. On the more acceptable side

of the range is the use of a single mouse to save a single leukemia victim. On the unacceptable side of the range is the use of an excessive number of animals to answer already-answered questions in poorly designed experiments. It would appear that a person's willingness to allow more or fewer uses of animals for research and therapeutics depends upon his or her culture and ethical values. If this is so, then those who are now in the classroom, learning the science that is the basis of technological applications, should become acquainted with their own ethical biases, with differing ethical perspectives, and with universally acknowledged principles of right and wrong.

Technology in the Classroom

The urgency of bringing ethics into the science classroom becomes apparent when we realize that technology has already entered. Only a decade ago, the citizens of Boston voted to restrict research involving laboratory practices that are now occurring in an ever-increasing number of secondary classrooms: the recombination of a gene from one organism into the genetic makeup of another organism. The process is simple, the science elegant. But the dynamic and controversial character of biotechnology makes it a prime arena for applying moral reasoning to a technological issue. Let us consider just two of the current dilemmas that have resulted from this new genetic technology and that this generation of students will have to address.

Testing for previously elusive genetic diseases is now possible. Who should get the results of those tests? If the individuals who are tested get the results, should they have them before the child-bearing years? Should the tests be required in the "interest of future generations"? Should life and health insurance companies be allowed access to the results or require the tests before a policy is issued?

Plants may now be genetically manipulated to be resistant to certain herbicides and to produce amino acids that they were previously incapable of producing. Should the industry that sells the seeds to such plants be the same industry that sells the herbicide? Can we restrict an industry's research, development, and marketing of such seed/herbicide combinations? Do we want to develop a plant that gives us enough protein such that meat sources are not required in our diet? And—perhaps the most difficult but serious possibility to consider—do we want to decrease the diversity of plant genes so much that the species would be endangered if there were an abrupt change in the environment?

Empowering Students Ethically

Can we allow our students to enter the workforce if they cannot make a connection between ethics and technological applications? No matter what the reason—incomplete education, the weaker role of the family and church—many students are ill-prepared to deal with the ethical dimension of technology. What we know about moral development and the cultural foundations of our ethical framework needs to be integrated with what we know and teach about nature. Science educators are empowering students to be part of a technological culture; they must at the same time empower them *ethically*.

A broader range of students needs not only more science, but the ability to make ethical judgments. They must be willing and able to apply the sciences to our social needs with good judgment and yet without fearing that every innovation will bring about a "Frankenstein."

What Schools Can Do

As an educational institution concerned about the moral and ethical development of young people, consider what you can do to help empower science students ethically. Schools might consider guest lectures or conferences on ethics and technology, with speakers from nearby technological companies and universities. Science teachers can incorporate ethical values and skills into their courses and work with other teachers to develop lessons that can be shared. They might also consider giving a presentation at a regional or national teachers' convention (such as the National Science Teachers Association), focusing on the development of decision-making skills or the cultural background of our moral framework. Science teachers can also write, for a school publication or parents' newsletter, or for a professional magazine such as *The Science Teacher* or the *Journal of Chemical Education*. And teachers of other disciplines—including, but not only, religion and ethics—can be in dialogue with science teachers. One does not have to be a scientist to improve the impact that technology has on society.

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GENERAL STUDIES

Moral Education in the Midst of International Crisis

Michael J. Gorman
CRIS Assistant Director

"Just go in and nuke 'em. No Vietnam — let's get in there fast, kick their butts, and get out."

"We have no business being over there. Let the Arabs settle the problem."

Comments such as these from typical Americans—civilian and military, young and old—have punctuated the conversations around dinner tables, at neighborhood taverns, and on talk shows. The subject, of course, is what the U.S. ought to do—or not to do—to Iraq for its aggressive actions in the Middle East. Those who attempt to deal rationally and carefully with the moral issues raised by political crises may be surprised at such comments and unprepared to engage those who hold these views in constructive dialogue. Within a school context, however, such moral analysis and dialogue are possible and, I would argue, even *essential* to the moral health of the entire school community.

Crisis as Opportunity

In a crisis like the one now occurring in the Persian Gulf region, schools have a unique opportunity to engage their students in serious moral reflection. Lest I appear to be on a mercenary quest for real-life "case studies" that might trivialize a grave situation, let me emphasize that it is precisely the complexity and possible consequences of this crisis that require educators to emphasize the broader moral issues of the specific situation. Neither unexamined outrage nor undiscerning apathy is appropriate. Hence the need for careful, critical thinking and discussion.

Because the crisis in the Middle East is such a multi-faceted problem, the moral issues can—and should—be highlighted in various contexts: in classrooms, in assembly, in chapel, in dining halls, in lounges and dorms. In the classroom, teachers of history, religion, economics, philosophy, ethics, English, and even science can appropriately turn their attention to the moral dimensions of this crisis.

One of the best methods for doing this is to have students carefully analyze the official and unofficial rhetoric of the crisis: speeches, press conferences, interviews, editorials, letters to the editor, newspaper articles, and so on. Teachers have a unique opportunity to help their students read, think, and write critically about what is happening in their world. Listed below are some of the issues and questions that ought to be part of school discussions. These are in no sense intended to be exhaustive; they are merely starting points.

The interrelated political, economic, historical, and religious forces at work

How does each of the principal nations involved justify its action historically, politically, and economically?

To what ethical principles (e.g., fairness, protection of the weak, self-defense) does each nation appeal in defense of its actions?

How does each nation use religion to support its attitudes and actions?

Values and actions

What basic values—moral, religious, political—of the nations (or their leaders) are revealed in this crisis?

Are there differences between the stated values and the real values of the nations?

Is the control of oil something that justifies either offensive (aggressive) or defensive action?

Should nations act out of self-interest? If so, can a nation still be judged for acting in its own interest? If not—or not only—what other principles should govern a nation's actions?

What motivates the international condemnation of Iraq? Have actions similar to those taken by Iraq ever been approved or committed by those who condemn them?

Violence and military force

Can the use of force or violence by a nation ever be justified? Can it ever be condemned? What are the criteria of justification and/or condemnation?

What have various religious traditions said about "holy wars" and "just wars"?

Is Iraq justified in considering this situation as a possible holy war?

What are the traditional Western criteria for a "just war" in terms of both cause and means (when to fight and how to fight)? Are the criteria met in this situation?

What are the military and moral differences between deterrent, defensive, and offensive action? between conventional and chemical or nuclear warfare?

For what religious/ethical reasons do some people (conscientious objectors) believe it is wrong to fight for their country? Must COs believe all war is wrong, or may they object only to certain wars?

Peacemaking and justice

Is levelling economic sanctions against a country just? What effect do they have on leaders? ordinary citizens? Are economic sanctions more or less moral than other means of exerting force?

Is peace an end (goal), a means, or both?

Must one sometimes sacrifice peace to attain justice, or vice versa?

What are the possible means of ending hostility and establishing peace in the region?

What is the role of pacifist or non-violent belief and action in this crisis?

Can one who condemns unjust or violent actions, without advocating forceful or violent solutions in retaliation, be held accountable for the injustice or violence?

Should the U.S. have a role in trying to establish peace and justice in the world?

Critical patriotism vs. blind nationalism

What is the difference between nationalism and patriotism? Which is more appropriate? Which dominates in the countries involved in the crisis?

What is civil religion (religious justification of national beliefs and practices)? How is it manifested in the countries involved?

If schools take these questions seriously, and encourage their students to do the same, they will be better equipped to understand, evaluate, and respond to the current crisis as responsible citizens of the nation and the world, as moral agents, and, in many cases, as people of deep faith who want that faith to direct their actions and attitudes.

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POSTSCRIPT

No More Room in the Schedule?

Michael J. Gorman

The articles in this anthology make one main point: religion and ethics, as academic endeavors, should and can be taught across the curriculum.

The American Academy of Religion is the nation's association of professional scholars and professors in religious studies. At a meeting on religion and the public schools at its annual convention in November of 1990, the point was forcefully driven home that most public high schools have no more room in their schedules to add courses in religion. Instead, the academic study of religion will have to be incorporated into the present curriculum—in English and social studies courses especially.

Many independent schools have—or are willing to make—room in their schedules for religion and ethics courses. Others, however, do not have room or choose, for a variety of reasons, not to make space. If religion and ethics are to be studied, they will, of necessity, have to be considered in already-existing courses.

There is often, therefore, a practical reason for incorporating religion and ethics into traditional courses. But there is also another, more important reason—a *moral* reason, if you will.

That reason is simple: religion and ethics are not compartments in life; they are the very stuff of life, what life is all about. This does not mean that schools should eliminate distinct courses in religion and ethics. Rather, they should have specialized courses for intense study *and* additional, deliberate efforts to make the consideration of religion and ethics a part of other (perhaps even *all*) courses. We hope that the preceding articles will stimulate school people to consider the importance and possibility of such efforts.

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